

A CITIZEN'S GUIDE to Development Review in Rockville



City of Rockville
Department of Community Planning
and Development Services

What is development review?

Development review is a general term for the City's various procedures to review proposed developments and ensure they comply with the City's regulations. These include land uses, engineering, utilities, stormwater and sediment control, and tree preservation to achieve consistent design of the site and related public infrastructure. As outlined in the Rockville Zoning Ordinance, the City works with the surrounding property owners, businesses and the applicant during development review. During this process, the City staff reviews applications for compliance and surrounding neighborhoods and property owners review and comment on proposed plans.

Rockville's development review procedures are intended to help assure the health and welfare of citizens and achieve high-quality development that complies with the design regulations of the City Code and addresses the needs of the surrounding community. These procedures govern all development projects except single-unit, detached residences.

How is development reviewed?

Rockville's development review process includes four phases.

Pre-application

During the pre-application phase, City staff meet with the developer to discuss the proposal; outline the project's size and potential impact on neighbors, green space, transportation, stormwater management, and other public infrastructure; learn about the zoning process; and ask questions. In most cases the developer will be required to notify the community of their plans and hold a public meeting for residents to comment on the project.

Application

During the application phase, the developer files the appropriate application materials and meets with City staff to discuss the proposal and any changes made as a result of the pre-application phase. In most cases the developer will be required to notify the community of their plans, hold a public meeting for residents to comment on the project and, in the case of very large projects, brief the Planning Commission and/or Mayor and Council. Also during this phase, City staff review the application package and coordinates with other government agencies and utilities that review the application.

Public Meeting

During the public meeting phase, the designated approving authority reviews the proposal and any changes made as a result of community feedback and decides whether to approve or disapprove the project. The designated approving authority depends on the project's potential impact and could be the Chief of Planning, Planning Commission or the Mayor and Council.

Decision

During the decision phase, City staff issues a decision letter based on the final action of the Approving Authority. Such action may approve the project as is, approve the project with specific conditions, or denying the project. The developer signs the letter acknowledging the decision and returns it with a final set of plans for inclusion in the public record.

Who reviews and approves development?

Rockville's Zoning Ordinance outlines four levels of development review based on the project's size and potential impact. Each project is assigned points based on acreage, number of dwelling units, square footage of non-residential space, residential area impact and traffic impact.

Depending on the number of points earned a project will require one of the following levels of review:

Site Plan Level 1- Review by the Chief of Planning

Site Plan Level 2- Review by the Planning Commission at one meeting

Site Plan Level 3- Review by the Planning Commission at two meetings; one for review and comment, the second for action

Project Plan- Review by the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council at three meetings; one for an initial briefing of both, one for review and recommendation by the Planning Commission and one for review and action by the Mayor and Council.

How can I get involved?

- Check the City's Web site at www.rockvillemd.gov for status updates on development projects in your neighborhood and the City.
- Attend public meetings held by developers to learn more, ask questions and express your opinions about potential projects.
- Attend public meetings held by the City. Meeting schedules, agendas and informational packets for the Mayor and Council, Planning Commission, Historic District Commission and Appeals Board are available on the City's Web site. In addition, for most cases the developer is required to provide notice by first class mail to the property owners and residents of the area surrounding the proposed development. The plan review level above determines the notice area.

How can I learn more?

Community Planning and Development Services Department
City Hall, second floor, 111 Maryland Avenue, Rockville, MD 20850

Phone: 240-314-8200

E-mail: cpds@rockvillemd.gov

Web site: www.rockvillemd.gov

Refer to: Rockville City Code, Chapter 25-Rockville Zoning Ordinance
www.rockvillemd.gov/zoning
Rockville Development Review Procedures Manual

Refer to: Rockville City Code-
Chapter 25 - Rockville Zoning Ordinance
Chapter 5 - Building Code
Chapter 10.5 - Forest and Tree Preservation
Chapter 19 - Sediment Control and Stormwater Management
Chapter 21 - Streets and Roads

Note: This brochure provides an overview of development review in Rockville. It does not supersede the Rockville City Code and it should not be relied on as a substitute for such regulations.

Development Review at a Glance

Pre-application Phase

1. The developer submits pre-application materials and fees.
2. City staff and the developer assess the project's potential impact.
3. City staff holds a pre-application meeting with the developer.
4. The developer notifies the community about the plans, if necessary.
5. The developer holds a public meeting for comments, if necessary.

Application Phase

1. Application and fees submitted.
2. The developer notifies the community about the plans, if necessary.
3. The developer holds a public meeting for comments, if necessary.
4. City staff evaluates the application and issues a report.

5. City staff and the developer brief the Planning Commission and Mayor and Council if necessary.

Public Meeting Phase

1. The designated approving authority reviews the application and issues a decision.
 - a. Mayor and Council
 - b. Planning Commission
 - c. Board of Appeals
 - d. Historic District Commission
 - e. City staff, i.e. the Chief of Planning

Decision Phase

1. City staff issues a decision letter based on the final action of the Approving Authority.
2. The developer acknowledges the decision and files a final set of project plans if approved.